



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/220,920	12/24/1998	JEFFREY D. MILBRANDT	6029-7996	5436

7590 10/20/2003
KIMBERLY H. LU
THOMPSON CORBURN
ONE US BANK PLAZA
ST. LOUIS, MO 63101

EXAMINER

MURPHY, JOSEPH F

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1646

DATE MAILED: 10/20/2003

33

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/220,920

Applicant(s)

MILBRANDT ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph F Murphy

Art Unit

1646

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 August 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 12, 15-24, 26, 27, 39 and 40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 23, 24 and 27 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 26, 39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 17, 18, 21, 22 and 40 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 1646

DETAILED ACTION

Formal Matters

Claim 1 and 11 were cancelled in Paper No. 31, 8/7/2003. Claims 12, 15-24, 26-27, 39-40 are pending and under consideration.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed in Paper No. 31, 8/7/2003 have been fully considered but they are persuasive in part.

The rejection of claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention has been obviated by Applicant's amendment, and is thus withdrawn.

Remaining issues are set forth below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112 first paragraph

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a nucleic acid encoding an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 26, does not reasonably provide enablement for a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Art Unit: 1646

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 are overly broad since insufficient guidance is provided as to which of the myriad of variant nucleic acids encode polypeptides which will retain the characteristics of Artemin. The artemin amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 26 is 220 amino acids long, while the claimed polynucleotide need encode an polypeptide which is 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26. Applicants do not disclose any actual or prophetic examples on expected performance parameters of any of the possible muteins of Artemin. It is known in the art that even single amino acid changes or differences in the amino acid sequence of a protein can have dramatic effects on the protein's function. It is also known in the art that a single amino acid change in a protein's sequence can drastically affect the structure of the protein and the architecture of an entire cell. For example, Voet et al. (1990) teaches that a single Glu to Val substitution in the beta subunit of hemoglobin causes the hemoglobin molecules to associate with one another in such a manner that, in homozygous individuals, erythrocytes are altered from their normal discoid shape and assume the sickle shape characteristic of sickle-cell anemia, causing hemolytic anemia and blood flow blockages (pages 126-128, section 6-3A and page 230, column 2, first paragraph).

Since the claims encompass nucleic acids encoding variant polypeptides and given the art recognized unpredictability of the effect of mutations on protein function, it would require undue experimentation to make and use the claimed invention. See *In re Wands*, 858 F.2d at 737, 8 USPQ2d at 1404. The test of enablement is not whether any experimentation is necessary, but whether, if experimentation is necessary, it is undue. Applicant argues that the specification provides assays to determine whether the polypeptides promote the survival of neurons without undue experimentation and that the claimed polypeptides share a common function. However,

Art Unit: 1646

Applicant has provided little or no guidance beyond the mere presentation of sequence data to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to determine, without undue experimentation, the positions in the protein which are tolerant to change (e.g. such as by amino acid substitutions or deletions), and the nature and extent of changes that can be made in these positions. Although the specification outlines art-recognized procedures for producing and screening for active muteins, this is not adequate guidance as to the nature of active derivatives that may be constructed, but is merely an invitation to the artisan to use the current invention as a starting point for further experimentation. Even if an active or binding site were identified in the specification, they may not be sufficient, as the ordinary artisan would immediately recognize that an active or binding site must assume the proper three-dimensional configuration to be active, which conformation is dependent upon surrounding residues; therefore substitution of non-essential residues can often destroy activity. It would require undue experimentation for one of skill in the art to practice the claimed method, since the skilled artisan would have to first generate potential Artemin variant peptides, then test for activity. Because the structure of a peptide determines its functional properties, and predictability of the function based on the structure is extremely complex, accurate predictions of a peptide's function from structural data are limited. Thus, since Applicant has only taught how to test for Artemin variant peptides, but has not taught how to make Artemin variant peptides it would require undue experimentation of one of skill in the art to practice the claimed Artemin variant peptides.

Art Unit: 1646

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Applicant is directed to the Guidelines for the Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1 "Written Description" Requirement, Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 4, pages 1099-1111, Friday January 5, 2001.

These are genus claims. The claims are drawn to a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26. The written description requirement for a claimed genus may be satisfied through sufficient description of a representative number of species by actual reduction to practice, reduction to drawings, or by disclosure of relevant identifying characteristics, i.e. structure or other physical and/or chemical properties, by functional characteristics coupled with a known or disclosed correlation between structure and function structure, or by a combination of such identifying characteristics, sufficient to show the applicant was in possession of the claimed genus. In the instant case, the specification fails to provide sufficient descriptive information, such as definitive structural or functional features of the claimed genus of polynucleotides. There is no description of the conserved regions which are critical to the structure and function of the genus claimed. There is no description of the sites at which variability may be tolerated and there is no information regarding the relation of structure to function. Furthermore, the prior art does not provide compensatory structural or correlative teachings sufficient to enable one of skill to isolate and identify the polynucleotides encompassed: there is no guidance in the art as to what the defining

Art Unit: 1646

characteristics of the encoded polypeptides might be. Thus, no identifying characteristics or properties of the instant polynucleotides are provided such that one of skill would be able to predictably identify the encompassed molecules as being identical to those instantly claimed.

Since the disclosure fails to describe the common attributes or characteristics that identify members of the genus, and because the genus is highly variant, a nucleic acid encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 26 is insufficient to describe the genus. One of skill in the art would reasonably conclude that the disclosure fails to provide a representative number of species to describe the genus. Thus, applicant was not in possession of the claimed genus.

Applicant argues that the specification discloses a representative number of species in the claimed genus. Applicant further argues that the claimed genus is consistent with Example 11 if the Written Description Guidelines. The written description requirement for a claimed genus may be satisfied through sufficient description of a representative number of species by actual reduction to practice, reduction to drawings, or by disclosure of relevant identifying characteristics, i.e. structure or other physical and/or chemical properties, by functional characteristics coupled with a known or disclosed correlation between structure and function structure, or by a combination of such identifying characteristics, sufficient to show the applicant was in possession of the claimed genus. In the instant case, the specification fails to provide sufficient descriptive information, such as definitive structural or functional features of the genus of polypeptides used in the claimed method. There is no description of the conserved regions which are critical to the structure and function of the genus claimed. There is no description of the sites at which variability may be tolerated and there is no information regarding the relation of structure to function. Structural features that could distinguish the compounds in the genus

Art Unit: 1646

from other seven transmembrane region compounds are missing from the disclosure.

Furthermore, the prior art does not provide compensatory structural or correlative teachings sufficient to enable one of skill to isolate and identify the polypeptides encompassed: there is no guidance in the art as to what the defining characteristics of the polypeptides might be. Thus, no identifying characteristics or properties of the instant Artemin variant peptides are provided such that one of skill would be able to predictably identify the molecules which would function in the claimed method. Because the structure of a peptide determines its functional properties, and predictability of the function based on the structure is extremely complex, accurate predictions of a peptide's function from structural data are limited. Thus, since Applicant has only taught how to test for Artemin variant peptides, but has not described Artemin variant peptides one of skill in the art would conclude that Applicant was not in possession of the claimed Artemin variant peptides.

The instant claims differ from Example 11 of the Written Description Guidelines, because the claims in Example 11 are directed to an isolated allele of DNA which encodes protein X. Since the amino acid sequence of protein X is known, there is a relatively small and definite genus of possible encoding polynucleotides, based upon the well-known genetic code tables. This is in contrast to the instant claims in which the claimed polynucleotides encode variant polypeptide with a certain function. However, as discussed above, the specification does not disclose the critical residues necessary for function, and that the effect of variants of the amino acid sequence on function are unpredictable, and there is no description of the sites at which variability may be tolerated and there is no information regarding the relation of structure to function. Thus, in the instant case, one of skill in the art would need to make potential variant

Art Unit: 1646

peptides and then test for functionality. Therefore, one of skill in the art would conclude that Applicant was not in possession of the claimed variant polypeptides.

Conclusion

Claims 17, 18, 21, 22, 40 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 26, 39 are rejected.

Claims 23, 24, 27 are allowable.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 1646

Advisory Information


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph F. Murphy whose telephone number is 703-305-7245. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Yvonne Eyler can be reached on 703-308-6564. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3014 for regular communications and 703-308-0294 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0196.



Joseph F. Murphy, Ph. D.
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 1646
October 14, 2003



YVONNE EYLER, PH.D.
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1600